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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

TUESDAY, February 28, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A. Publication offered: "Food for Children," Farmers' Bulletin 1674.

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Tuesdays come and Tuesdays go but food questions go on forever. And this week a number of questions happen to be about food for children.

For example, here's one from a mother who is in doubt about cheese as a food for children. She writes: "I have always understood that cheese was indigestible and not good for young children. But in our family we happen to eat a good deal of cheese and my little girl of five always wants her share. Will you tell me whether I could safely let her have some cheese now and then?"

That question I have referred to Mrs. Rowena Schmidt Carpenter of the Bureau of Home Economics. Mrs. Carpenter is the author of Farmers' Bulletin 1674 called "Food for Children" and also the Leaflet No. 42 called "Good Food Habits for Children." She says: "Cheese is a good food for a child of five if the child doesn't swallow it in lumps, and if it is used in the menu as the hearty food it is --not as an extra. Cottage cheese is an excellent food for anyone, young or old. And the hard kinds of cheese like American cheddar are all right if properly served and eaten. Children are all too likely to swallow food without enough chewing, you know. And this is especially the case with a smooth and slippery food like cheese.

"If cheese is swallowed in lumps, it digests slowly. That's what most people mean by 'hard' to digest; they mean slow to digest. For quicker digestion cheese needs to be divided or separated by other foods. A very good way to serve cheese to a child is in a thin slice between crackers, so the child will have to chew it to swallow it. Other good ways are in sandwiches, in macaroni and cheese, in milk sauce or tomato sauce or in cheese souffle."

The second letter in the mailbag brings up a question about eggs for children. Another mother asks: "How often can children eat eggs safely? I have always understood that eggs were likely to make children bilious and am surprised that my neighbor gives her little boy an egg every day."

Answer: The mistaken notion that eggs make children or anyone else "bilious" is just another one of those food superstitions that do a lot of harm in this world. Suppose I quote Mrs. Carpenter on eggs for children. She says: "Eggs are good building food. They contain efficient protein and are among the best sources of iron. The yolk of the egg is valuable also for several vitamins. Especially because of iron, egg yolk is one of the first foods added to milk in the baby's diet. From about the end of the weaning period through the pre-school years when milk is still an important source of protein, the child needs a whole egg or some meat at least once a day. An older child may have both more frequently."

Question Number 3 brings up the subject of vegetables for children:

"Please tell me how many vegetables and what vegetables a child of four should eat."

Answer: Children need at least 3 servings of vegetables each day in addition to potatoes. Leafy vegetables should have a prominent place in every child's meals because of their minerals and vitamins. The list of good leafy vegetables includes spinach, lettuce, chicory, cabbage, chard, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, collards, kale, cress, dandelion and mustard greens, turnip tops, beet tops, lamb's quarters, onions, and also the tops of celery.

Thin green leaves such as spinach, green lettuce, and beet and turnip tops are richer in iron and some of the vitamins than bleached thick leaves like onion and stored winter cabbage, but all the leaf vegetables and also tomatoes, green beans, green peas, carrots, asparagus and cauliflower are good for children. They are useful as supplements in food value to tubers like potatoes and white root vegetables, as well as to cereals and dried beans, peas or other dried legumes.

The fourth question is also about vegetables. I'll read it just as it comes from the mailbag: "Please tell me whether raw or cooked vegetables are better for my youngsters."

Answer: Raw and quickly cooked vegetables are both good for children. But long cooking partially destroys some of the vitamins in most vegetables. Tomatoes are the exceptions to that rule. Tomatoes hold their vitamin C when heated, and canned tomatoes are especially valuable when fresh vegetables are scarce. Every child should have every day one raw and one quickly cooked fresh vegetable as well as potatoes. Finely chopped cabbage or celery, grated carrots, chopped lettuce or watercress and peeled tomatoes may be given raw to most young children. Raw chopped vegetables mixed with creamed butter make an excellent spread for children's sandwiches.

Last question: "Where can I get a book of simple information on the right food for children?"

Answer: From the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. Simply send a postcard with your address asking for Farmers' Bulletin 1674 called "Food for Children." As long as the supply lasts, this bulletin is free. Once again: Food for Children, Farmers' Bulletin 1674. Write the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

And that's all the questions and answers for today.

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